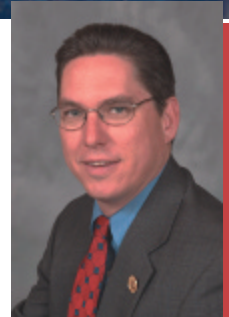


Dave Crooks

Indiana State Representative, District 63



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

In addition, you will find a map of our new legislative district. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts. I welcome those of you who are new to the district and look forward to working with you in the coming months to make Indiana a better place to live.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at H63@ai.org or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

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New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, the budget bill that became law continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

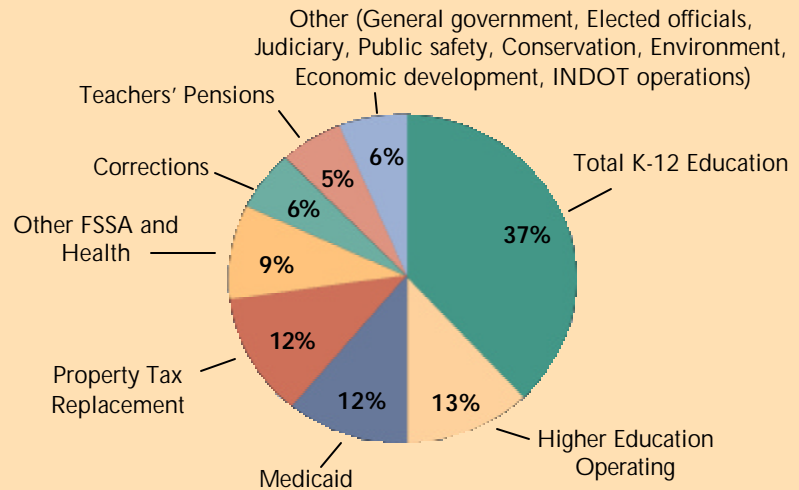
Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



Insurance reform, computer access laws focus of Crooks legislation



REP. CROOKS ADDRESSES THE HOUSE.

As Chair of the House Insurance, Corporations and Small Business Committee, I was involved in the passage of several technical bills. For example, I co-authored House Enrolled Act 1120, which requires an insurer to inform a prospective policyholder of the availability of mine subsidence insurance. We were also successful in passing HEA 1555, a consumer protection bill, which the Governor has been attempting to pass for years. The law protects Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) enrollees from health care provider bill liability if the HMO does not pay.

I authored a law which gives Hoosiers increased access to the workings of the General Assembly. HEA 1100 provides video and/or audio coverage over the Internet or another broadcast medium of legislative sessions and other activities. Indiana now joins over 30 other states that provide Internet access of their Legislatures.

Another technology law addresses state employees and people with disabilities. I authored HEA 1926, which complies with federal rules that require state and federal computers to be more attainable to the public. It puts the Internet and other learning tools within reach for people with disabilities.

Finally, I was pleased to see the passage of HEA 1066, which permits the court to suspend the driver's license of someone who steals gasoline. In writing this law, my hope is that we will discourage those people who would drive away from a gas station without paying.



New laws address environmental protection and school issues

House Enrolled Act 1967 allows local fire departments to recover the expense of cleaning up hazardous waste spills by charging the parties responsible for the spills. Through SEA 273, businesses can obtain tax credits to help clean up former hazardous waste sites known as brownfields. HEA 2042 creates a program to provide state assistance for people interested in cleaning up and capping abandoned oil and gas wells.

Charter Schools

After several years of debate, legislators finally agreed to pass a bill that will allow charter schools in the state of Indiana. These are independent schools that are able to design their own curriculums and

control their own spending without worrying about state authority.

Under Senate Enrolled Act 165, three groups have the ability to sponsor charter schools: local school boards, Indiana's public universities and the mayor of Indianapolis. Those entities will be required to set up their own criteria for establishing the schools, and advocates are hopeful that sponsors can begin accepting applications from interested parties before the end of this year.

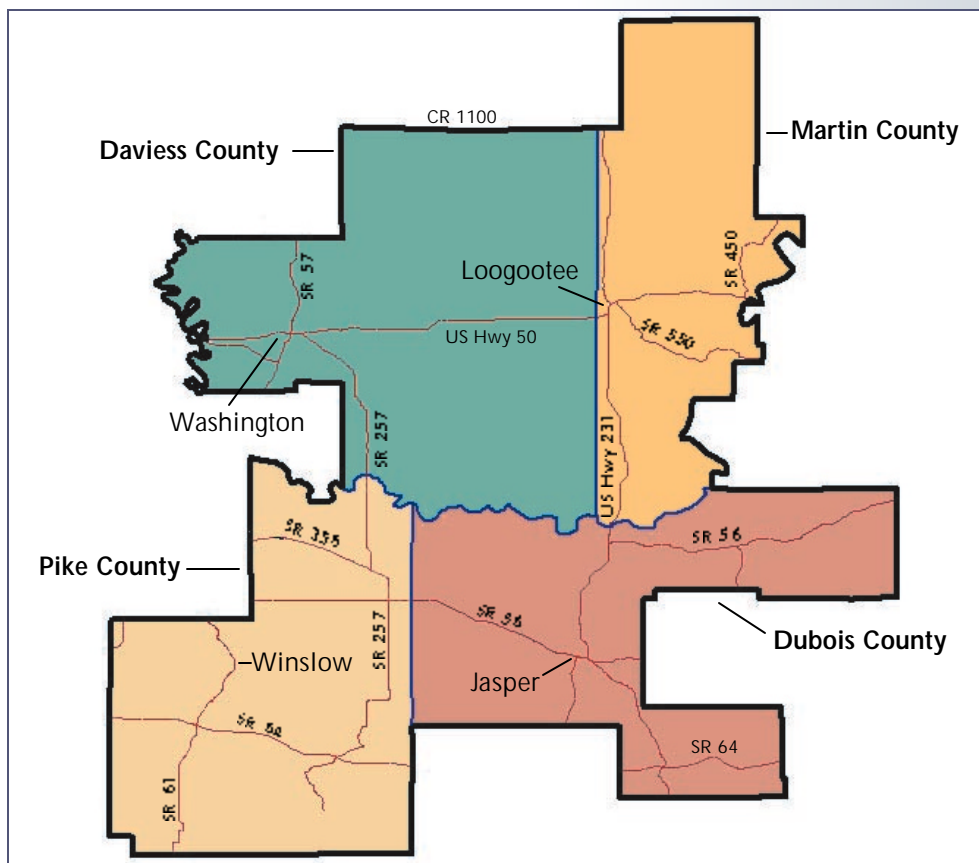
New kindergarten date

Children who turn five years of age by July 1 will be able to attend kindergarten classes that fall through a provision included in the state budget. Previously, a child had to be five by June 1.

Build Indiana Funds go to District 63

- City of Washington: Hawkins Creek retention basin project
- Montgomery VFD: new truck
- Montgomery Ruritan: park improvements
- Washington Twp. VFD: equipment
- SE Daviess Co. Fire Dept.: equipment
- Holland VFD: new truck
- Huntingburg VFD: equipment
- Haysville VFD: new firehouse
- Martin Co. 4-H: building project
- West Boggs-Daviess/Martin Parks: cabins
- Crane VFD: equipment
- City of Loogootee: city pool
- Otwell/Jefferson Twp. Community Center: building improvements
- Jefferson Twp. VFD: equipment
- Town of Spurgeon: paving city streets
- Oakland City: park improvements
- Jasper Older American Center
- Jasper sewer

The new look of District 63



During this year's session you may have heard about redistricting in the news. After each census, the Indiana General Assembly is required by law to redraw House, Senate and Congressional district boundaries according to population changes.

District boundaries are very complicated, and it took months of effort and debate among legislators to reach a consensus. In the end, however, I feel that the district lines we have drawn are as fair as possible.

There were no changes to the district lines in Martin County. Bainbridge and Jackson Townships in Dubois County are now encompassed in the district, and those of you in the southern part of Washington Township in Daviess County are also now included in District 63.

For both the current members and those new to the district, I look forward to serving you. Please contact me if you have questions about the district or any other matters.



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Privacy from telemarketers and election reform

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and other issues online with
Representative Crooks



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In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List at 1-888-834-9969**.

In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take

advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

Through provisions contained in House Enrolled Act 1510, the state has moved closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.